

W. C. T. U. NOTES.

OUR NATIONAL CIRCUS.
BY CARRIE LEE CARTER.

Of all the amusements which delight the hearts of dwellers in small towns, and of the farming people settled around each village, first and foremost is the circus, and autumn is its favorite season for appearing. The chill winds which make the festive picnic and barbecue become things of the past, bring as recompense the circus, on its way to warmer Southern climes, and gorgeous advertisements which decorate walls and fences, come to town with autumn's first breath; and while woods and fields are illumined with bright leaves and golden flowers, our streets blossom in the colors of the rainbow, and tell of the "Most Colossal Aggregation of Magnificent Wonders the Universe has Ever contained." Then it is the small boy saves his dimes, and he who has none becomes suddenly industrious in the fear of not laying the requisite admission to the charmed tent. And then, too, the "old boys" think that they really must "take the children to see the animals." But when, at last, the day comes, and the street parade, with its brass band and wonderful chariots appears, every one decides at once, that of course they must go, just this time. And go they do, great and small, and witness the same performance, and laugh at the same old jokes which they have seen and heard time and again.

Some of our good people who think it almost a sin to attend a circus, and are horrified at the thought of going to one, do not know that they are attending a circus every day of their lives, and sometimes assuming the role of actor therein. Our National Circus, which is conducted by the great Liquor League, that employs thousands of actors from every station of life, is giving performances daily. Their street parade is not the occurrence of an ever-present advertising of the business from the glittering bar-rooms of fashion to the lowest grog-gery or drunkard on the street.

The tickets to this circus are men's ballots, which not only entitle their owners to be spectators, but also to take part in the performance, if they so desire. Women are only allowed to use complimentary tickets, and have no right to take part in the show, or object to any part of the performance. All that is required of them is that they occupy reserved seats, look smiling and happy, and be fed on the pink lemonade and peanuts of flattery, which is generally their only share in the profits of the great concern.

But women from their reserved seats have an excellent opportunity to witness the many performances of the actors, which, from the grand *entrée* to the close of the concert, are truly wonderful. The high license trapeze supports some daring and brilliant acrobats, and their feats we watch with bated breath, fearful lest they should fall from their dangerous positions. The "trained donkeys" excite our admiration when we see them so cheerfully obey the voice of their master (the political "boss") for they remember the choice morsel which is the reward of obedience. With what dexterity the ring-master, the National Brewer's and Liquor Dealers' Association, whips up the two fiery chargers in the race—the Democratic and Republican parties—and how timidly they feel at his command, while the clowns, generally red-nosed politicians, crack their stale jokes, chief favorite among them being "Prohibition doesn't prohibit."

Then come the men who are so noted for turns and contortions of mind as well as body, that we can be sure they possess no such article as a backbone. The performers on the tight rope, most of them very tight indeed, how wonderful! Perhaps you don't care for to stay for the concert, which is sometimes quite tragical frequently having a murder for the main feature of the entertainment? The side shows of court-rooms, insane asylums, poor-houses and prisons, are always entertaining, and so is the menagerie, with its fine collection of "blind tigers," "snakes," and "billed owls."

In our town, business in the large tent, the saloon, has been closed, because the audience objected to some of the performances, and then, too, the proprietor turned his trained animals, and occasionally a fierce, wild one, loose on the streets, until it became unpleasant, and sometimes quite dangerous to walk out. In justice, though, I must say the people never rested until the lion-tamer (the town marshal) secured the dangerous animal, and in such a case I have seen hundreds of our country's brave men walk in triumphant procession after the muttering, growling animal with his keeper. With happy, smiling faces they saw him securely fastened in the cage, and then returned to their employments until the time arrived for another to be turned loose. But after a time in which a few of the people had been protesting and preaching and praying, the saloon was condemned and vanished.

But for fear of too extreme dullness, we still have drugstores, doctors, and a temperance saloon for side-shows, and many amusing and strange tricks of magic are displayed to our astonished eyes that of obtaining a prescription without having a disease; of a man getting drunk in a temperance saloon, where, of course, no intoxicants are sold; and, still stranger, the changing by magic of the lemonade or soda-water called for into beer or whiskey, which the customer drinks entirely oblivious of the change.

Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool all the people part of the time, and part of the people all the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time." Our Democratic and Republican brethren may talk wisely about the merits of their respective parties, but let some unreasoning woman ask what those parties are doing towards protecting their boys and their homes against the terrible curse of intemperance, and they cannot frame a reply, for, as "Josiah Allen's Wife" says, "they've got no frame to put it in."

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